FOREWORD

OF BOOKS ON INDIA there is no lack, and every season brings many additions to them. And yet it is sad to think how superficial and partial most of them are. I am often asked to recommend some books on India and, though I make some suggestions, I am keenly conscious of the poverty of the field of choice. The literature on modern India began in the nineteenth century with books written by Englishmen who had served in India. Inevitably they reflected the mentality of their class and treated India as an administrative problem. India was to them a land where viceroys and governors and district officials bravely functioned, and the hundreds of millions of Indians formed a distant, unpleasant and rather vague background to their activities. History was not understood or was distorted, current facts and conditions were ignored, everybody who disagreed with them was frowned upon and dubbed an agitator, and a legend of the white man's burden was built up.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a few Indians took to the writing of books on India- Some excellent work was done, notably byDadabhai Naoroji and Romesh Dutt, but later the growth of nationalism led to sentimental writing in praise of India's past and in condemnation of British rule. These influenced Indian opinion greatly and produced a healthy reaction against the*feelings of inferiority and helplessness which the writings of British officials had produced But most of these books were inadequate, one-sided and very limited in outlook.

During recent years a new kind of book has appeared, in